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educate our great middle class, so that they may benefit by what they have, rather than tax a few over-worked nurses in order to encourage the foolish prejudice of those who prefer to be nursed at home!

NANCY P. ELLICOTT, *R. N.*,  
J. H. H., 1903.

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### EVOLUTION OF THE NURSING PROFESSION

DEAR EDITOR: It was with unusual interest that the writer perused both your editorial in the April number and the comments upon it in the June number, by "A Registered Nurse."

All history shows that great progress comes about as an evolutionary process.

Very short-sighted, indeed, must the well-informed nurse be who does not see and realize that nursing is in a marvelous state of rapid evolution, working for the eventual betterment of the whole nursing body.

It is a well-recognized fact that there is a stage of more or less apparent chaos in all reform movements and we, as members of the great nursing body, cannot expect to escape this stage for the transition periods from preferred occupation, to avocation, and to profession, are working more rapidly at present than ever before.

The great trouble is with ourselves. To get the best out of anything worth doing is to enter it with the question: "What can I put into this work?" not "What can I get out of it?" Too many of us enter nursing and nursing reforms with the question "What can it do for me?"

In the law, the ministry, and the medical profession, the beginner realizes that he lacks the experience with men and affairs as well as in his profession that entitles him to a place on the top round and a fee in the top notch, and he begins accordingly. In the meanwhile, he *studies*, takes *post-graduate* work, in fact, does everything possible to make himself the peer or the superior of his contemporaries. In due time, if he has proven his worth as a man as well as in his professional capacity, he can place his fees where his worth may entitle him to do so. But those who have not been able to stand the trial by fire eventually take up life in more congenial fields or become stragglers.

The nurse who condemns what she calls the overcharging of the rich or the undercharging of the poor by physicians, fails to realize the fact that such professions as medicine, nursing, the law or the ministry—professions whose purpose is to protect the life and liberty of the people—cannot be made to conform to ironclad conventional

and ethical rules. Such professions must obey, first of all, the Golden Rule.

The following incident will illustrate the point:

A man of large means from a Texas town went to consult a Chicago specialist of world renown, concerning the eyes of his young daughter. After an examination, the doctor assured him that it was a hopeless case—nothing known to science could save his daughter from total blindness, and presented him with a bill for five hundred dollars. The Texan was somewhat startled and remonstrated that the doctor had done nothing, to which the doctor replied: "You have travelled hundreds of miles because you were willing to accept my diagnosis of the case as final; my prognosis has saved you thousands of dollars which you would otherwise have expended in seeking relief for her. In my hour and a half's conversation with you I have reconciled you to her future and shown how you may still make life bright and worth the living for her. This afternoon I go to a Charity Hospital, where I go every afternoon, to give my services." The Texan, seeing that this man was working to alleviate the sufferings of mankind, willingly paid the five hundred dollars. Nor need we add that the doctor did not try to impress his clinic patients with the fact that he was doing them a charity act.

There is a quality in real and true professional work that money never pays for. The professions that guard the life or liberty of humanity cannot put their work upon a purely money basis or it would more than bankrupt the Rothschilds.

The architect, according to the plan of a house, charges the same, whether it be for a rich man or a poor one; but that is a matter in which a man may choose.

We have no right to deny to the great middle-class patient suitable nursing service in the emergency "created by the hand of God or the public enemy."

Now, it is for us to decide by our action if we will work out our salvation along professional lines.

So long as we talk of "wage" and "uniform charges," we put ourselves upon a trades-union basis, and need not be surprised if many people look upon our registration laws as they do upon those of plumbers, instead of as we wish them to do, viz., as upon the laws of the medical profession.

Formerly the professions were limited to the classes of people who earned a livelihood by mental work alone.

We, as a nursing body, are trying to prove that those who work with mind and hands almost equally, are entitled to be classed as

professionals, too; but we must live up to it. We must enlarge our perspective and not keep our eyes upon the ground. On a moving train, if you keep your eyes on the portion of the landscape close to the window, your vision becomes blurred, but by looking far out toward the horizon, you get a fair view of the country. So it is with the ruling events of every day—we must not let them blind us to the great object we have in view. One must not allow the inevitable daily demands and exigencies of life to altogether obscure from us remoter and higher ends. Of course, there are and always will be those who have others to help, but these present realities must not let them lose sight of their ideals.

The day is bound to come when our fees shall be largely in proportion to the means of the patient.

The lawyers have long since charged so, the doctors are making it an established practice, and we, in our turn, if we are to be a professional body and not a trades-union, are bound to reach that point. If we help to hasten the day, so much the better for all.

It will come when we have fewer and better training-schools; when the older nurses keep fully abreast of the times; when the younger nurses do not feel competent to charge a larger fee than those who have had wider experience with disease, men, and affairs; and when, too, we do not try to burn the candle at both ends by working night and day, thus making our period of usefulness far shorter than it should be.

L. MAY BUSHEY,  
New Orleans.

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### THE WEARING OF THE UNIFORM

DEAR EDITOR: A physician who recently spent some days at the Virginia Hot Springs recited the following incident, followed by the inquiry as to whether the nursing profession at large regarded such practices favorably:

“A trained nurse appeared in the general dining-room regularly at all meals in full uniform. He informed me that several persons, men particularly, commented upon it, and referred to him as one who should understand the proprieties in such a case. The question naturally arises, Did not the young woman rather enjoy being conspicuous? Should not nurses rather prefer to confine the use of the uniform to its legitimate sphere? There is no doubt that the large majority of nurses would regard the parading of the uniform with disfavor.” N. E. C.

[Another instance of an unwise individual bringing discredit upon the whole nursing body. It would be interesting to know if this woman is a graduate from a reputable school.—ED.]